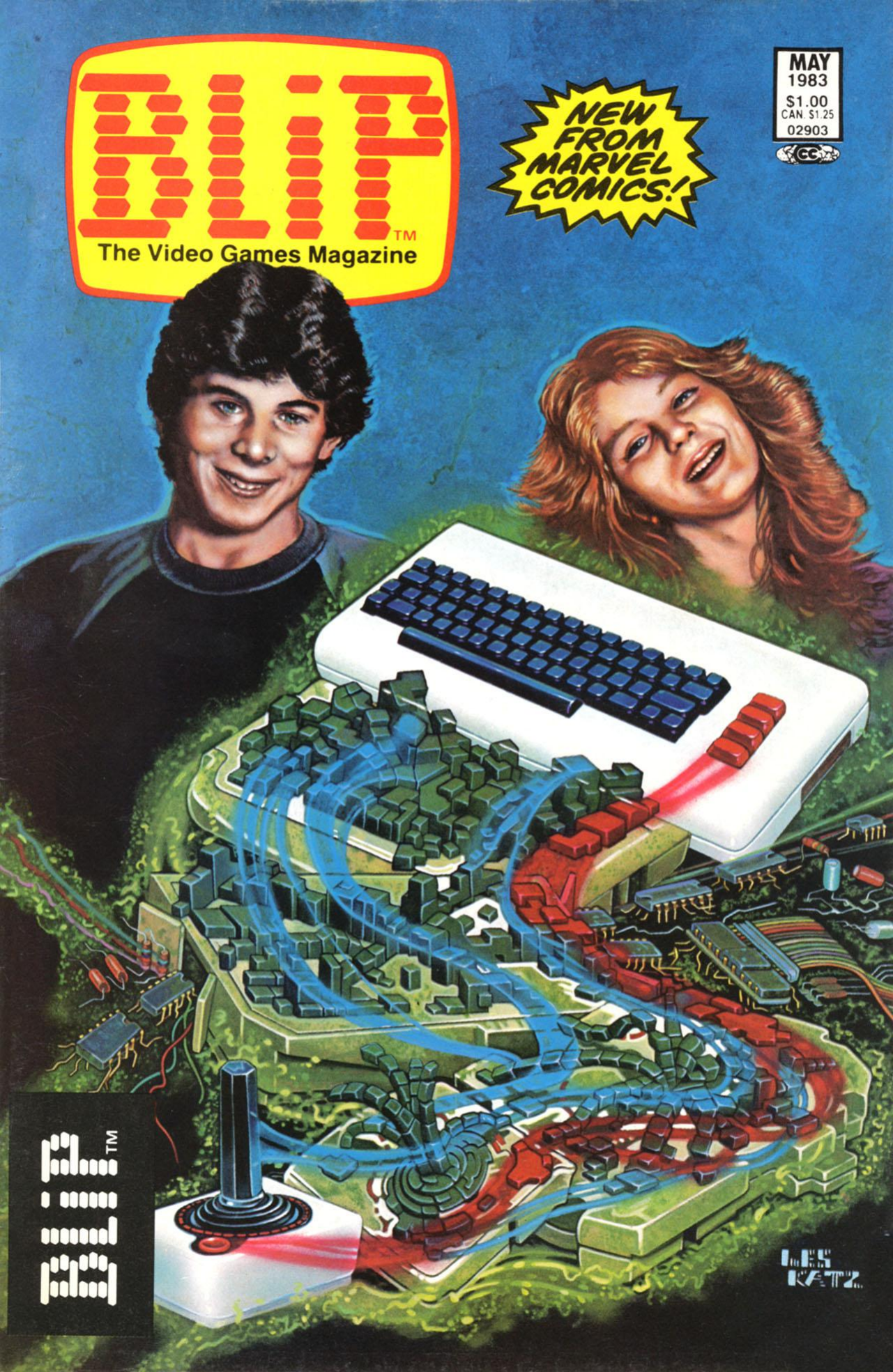
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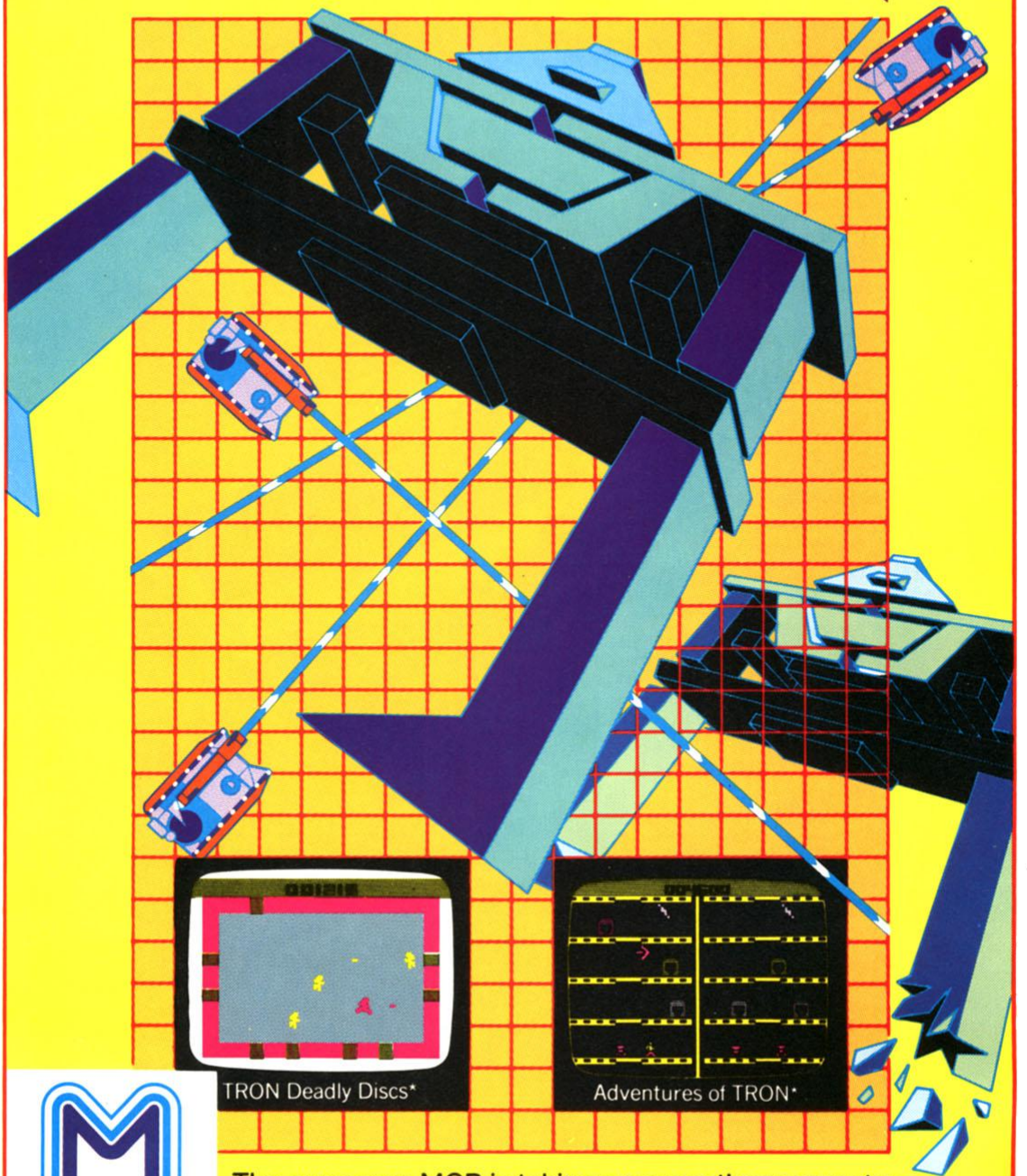

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Adventures of TRON*

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BLIP™

The Video Games Magazine

Vol. I, No. 4
May, 1983

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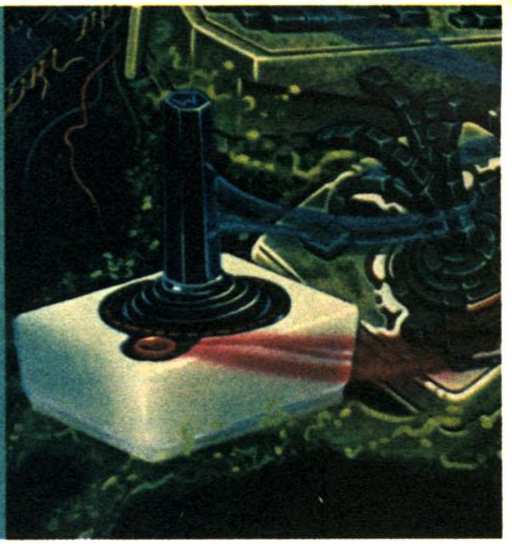
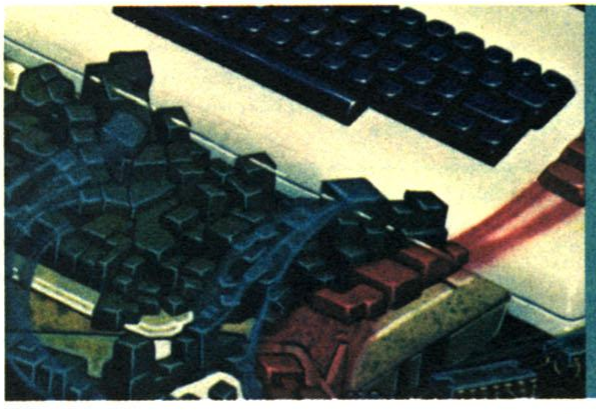
Where the JOYSTICK Leads





BLIP NEWS FLASH!
The video game industry, as we know it, is on the verge of extinction.

No, that news flash doesn't mean you'll someday have to go to The Nostalgia Shoppe to buy cartridges. It just means that video games will soon merge with a friendly competitor — a family relative, really. All we're predicting is that video games, in a very short time, will become part of the computer industry.

Odyssey, Mattel, and Atari are already in the computer business. And in a few months we should see an adapter that converts ColecoVision into a computer.

So the handwriting is on the wall. If you expect to keep up with the latest in video games, you're probably going to need a home computer sooner or later.

But if you read BLIP, you're too smart to buy a computer just so you can keep up with the latest in games. That would be like buying a $20,000 sports car to get back and forth to the grocery store.

No, if you're tempted to buy a computer, you'll want to do more with it than play games. "But," we hear you say, "I don't know what I could do with a home computer!"

Well, just be thankful that you have BLIP. If you think a computer is something that's useful only for bookkeepers, banks, and billing clerks, read on. Here are some examples— out of hundreds we could give you — of what some people have used personal computers for.

ONE

Tony Pomeroy is a 14-year-old runner. Tony has every intention of winning a gold medal in the 1988 or 1992 Olympics. Right now, the most important thing in the world to him is how to improve his speed and stamina.

Tony has written a computer program that keeps a record of his running times, together with changes in his diet, changes in the seasons, and several other factors that can affect his performance. The computer stores the information, sorts it out, and answers Tony's questions about how he reacts to different things.

Tony would need dozens of books to keep all this information on paper, and it would take him hours to go through them looking for answers to his questions. The computer does the job in seconds.

TWO

With a special connection, you can hook a computer up to your telephone. Then, by dialing a certain number, you can tie in with huge computers that have as much information stored in their memories as you'll find in a large library. By asking the right questions, you can get your personal computer to display just about any piece of information you need.

THREE

Tasha is 12 years old. She's been fooling around with her parents' computer for about a year. With a very small amount of help, she has written a computer animation program.

A graphic symbol starts at the upper left corner of the screen. A different symbol starts at the bottom right corner. They move in opposite directions, crossing the screen at high speed, and moving toward the center one line at a time. When they collide in the center, they disappear and the screen is filled with an explosion of tiny hearts.

FOUR

Jim Kordell plays guitar, and he also writes songs. He loves picking out original tunes on his guitar. But he hates writing the music—drawing all those little symbols on five-line staffs.

Jim has a computer hooked up to an electronic piano keyboard. He also has a program that instructs the computer to display on the screen whatever is played on the keyboard.

First, he invents the melody on his guitar. Then he plays it on the keyboard. The computer shows the written music on the screen. Then Jim gives the computer a command, and it supplies a printed version of what he played.

FIVE

Even if you don't do much typing now, you probably will do a lot in the future. Most computers can be turned into word processors just by inserting a program. With a word processor, you see your typing on the screen instead of on a piece of paper. You can make changes and corrections as you go along. You can change the format from a wide column to a narrow column. You can even insert whole paragraphs where you want them.

When you have the material just the way you want it, you give the machine a command to print it. That's when you first get it on paper — and the printed version is perfect.

SIX

Chris Terhune is a movie fanatic. He knows the names of the producer, director, stars, camera operator, music arranger, and screenwriter of hundreds of movies. He has stored all this information on a disk.

Now he can give you the answers to some pretty astounding questions about movies, and he can do it in seconds. Mention Robert Redford, and he'll give you a list of every movie the star appeared in. A few seconds more, and he can give you a list of every science fiction movie released in 1979.

If you really want to get silly, ask him for the titles of all the movies released in 1976 that were directed by someone whose last name begins with the letter G. He can get that for you in a few seconds too.

SEVEN

After only a few hours of practice, you can write programs that will have a computer "carry on a conversation" with any person who sits at its keyboard. The computer will ask some questions, and the person will type in the answers. Then the computer will use the answers to make the rest of the conversation seem personal, as though it's actually talking only to the person sitting in front of it.

EIGHT

If you're using a computer as a word processor, you can add another program that will turn you into a perfect speller. After you've finished typing — but before you have the material printed — you tell the computer to check your spelling. It will go through the whole piece and correct any words you misspelled.

NINE

There are educational games made for computers that will teach you more about math, science, and many other subjects than you ever thought you could know. One of the best we've ever seen is ROCKY'S BOOTS, a game simple enough for a five-year-old to understand, but hard enough to keep college students busy for hours.

In ROCKY'S BOOTS, you're given several machine parts that are powered by electricity. You have to invent a way of putting the parts together so that you have a machine that will kick an annoying alligator off the screen.

Then, of course, there are games. Not games to play, because you already know about those. We're talking about games you can invent. You have to know a lot about programming to write video games. But if you're willing to work at it, you're just as capable of writing games as anyone else. And why be satisfied with only playing them, if you can actually invent them yourself?

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DONA and the CANDY FACTORY

The Atari headquarters in Sunnyvale, California, now consist of 14 buildings. Late in 1980, a visitor to these buildings noticed that the employees didn't seem to think of themselves as workers. The word *work* was used very loosely at Atari in those days. "This isn't a company," the visitor said to himself. "It's a candy factory."

That was the way it seemed to Dona Bailey, too. She was 25, and she had just joined Atari as a programmer. She was hired to work on the development of video games.

Dona liked the candy-factory atmosphere. Within a year, she had designed CENTIPEDE, one of the biggest video game hits of all. As a result, Dona Bailey became the first female star in a field that had been as male as the New York Yankees.

Dona grew up in Little Rock, and she earned a degree in psychology from the University of Arkansas. She got a job working with statistics for the Bell Systems in Little Rock, but she found that work boring.

She had taken some courses in computer science in college. This helped her to get a job as a programmer with a division of General Motors in California. She worked on the computer that controls the engine in the Cadillac Seville.

She didn't find that any more exciting than her previous job. To escape the boredom, she began spending lunch hours at an arcade down the road from the plant. She became hooked on SUPER BREAKOUT and SPACE INVADERS.

Like everyone else, Dona knew about Atari. She realized that they were a couple of hundred miles north of where she was living.

One day, it dawned on her. "They make these games," she thought. "What they do every day is what I do every day. But I get Cadillac engines, and they get these games!"

So she quit her job and headed for the part of California that housed dozens of computer and video games companies. "The place was a programmer's heaven," Dona recalls. "Almost everybody there had something to do with computers."

She got four job offers and decided to take the one from Atari. She loved the place. She was free to do just about whatever she wanted to do.

"Those first weeks," she says, "I walked around and got used to the labs and offices. I talked to the other programmers who worked there. We had long conversations about video games and what makes a game interesting.

"I read old printouts, just to get an idea of how a game is put together. And I spent a lot of time in the company's game room. It had every game that Atari had ever made. And they were all on free play. It was great!"

Just about everybody knows CENTIPEDE, Dona Bailey's contribution to Atari's long string of hit games. A centipede, made up of many segments, appears at the top of

the screen. It moves down slowly through a field of mushrooms, row by row. You shoot from the bottom of the field, trying to destroy centipede segments before they collide with your gun. You're also threatened by spiders, fleas, and scorpions. You have to destroy them before they get to you.

CENTIPEDE isn't a difficult game to learn. Even beginners often clear the first board. And many players can keep CENTIPEDE going longer on one quarter than any other game.

Where did the basic idea for CENTIPEDE come from? Dona told BLIP that it wasn't from her.

"At Atari," she explained, "they had a big project-idea book. It gave the status of all the games in development. In the book, there was a one-sentence description of a game called CENTIPEDE. It read: "A multi-segmented creature comes onto the screen and breaks into pieces when shot by the player.' "

The description interested Dona. She began working in her lab with her computer, hoping to turn the idea into a game.

It was a long, hard struggle. Dona began spending ten or more hours a day moving images around on her computer screen. Months went by, and she kept at it.

"The game took over my life," she says. "It became an obsession. I started dreaming about it at night. In fact, I still dream about it once in a while, even though I've been involved in designing two other games since."

Dona credits many other people with contributing to the development of CENTIPEDE. She says she got a lot of help from Ed Logg, for example. Ed had dreamed up most of ASTEROIDS, and he was the CENTIPEDE project director.

Some people gave helpful advice without even realizing it. Dona told us about one such incident from the early stages of the game's development.

"I was working on the path that the centipede takes. I would mark the screen with a small block wherever a centipede section had been shot."

As Dona explained it, a programmer sometimes needs a visual reminder of where collisions occur on the screen. Otherwise, things can get hopelessly confused.

"Well, this one day," she says, "I had the screen pretty well filled up with these little blocks. Someone came up behind me, watched for a while, and said, 'Hey, look at the maze game you've got there!' "

Dona was about to correct him, when she realized he was right. She *had* created a maze with all those little blocks, and she hadn't even realized it.

"We decided to leave it as a maze game," she went on. "But we changed the shape of the little blocks to mushrooms. Every time a centipede section got shot, a mushroom would be left in its place. And the mushrooms would eventually form a maze for the player to get through."

One reason that CENTIPEDE is so popular is that the controls are simple. Besides pressing the Fire button, all you have to do is spin a trak ball to move the gun.

"At first," says Dona, "we talked about controlling the gun with buttons. But I panicked at the thought of buttons. I've never been able to use them comfortably. I keep thinking about what my fingers are doing."

So they switched from buttons to a joystick. Dona tried that and found she didn't like it much.

"I remembered seeing some trak balls lying around the labs," she says. "At the time, MISSILE COMMAND was about the only game that used a trak ball. But I thought it would be great for CENTIPEDE. So I kept pushing until they gave us one."

Dona thinks the simple controls are only

one reason for the game's success. She says it was also fortunate that the game was introduced at the right time.

"Because of PAC-MAN," she points out, "maze games were just beginning to catch on. CENTIPEDE benefitted from that craze."

We told Dona that we'd heard CENTIPEDE called more of a woman's game than a man's. To our surprise, she said she thinks that's true.

"I began to realize that after the game had been in arcades for a while," she told us. "I'd be introduced to a guy as the designer of CENTIPEDE, and he'd say, 'Oh, yeah, my girlfriend likes that game,' or 'My wife likes that game.' But I hardly ever heard a guy say, '*I* like it.' "

Dona says that no one set out to make CENTIPEDE appeal to women. It just happened to work out that way.

Was she surprised by CENTIPEDE's enormous success?

"I guess I was," Dona says. "But I wasn't surprised that my friends liked it. After all, the game reflects my personality. It's straightforward. It teases you. It jokes around with you. That's the way I am. What did surprise me, I guess, is that people who didn't know me liked it."

Late in 1982, Dona left Atari to join Videa, a small new company in Sunnyvale that makes entertainment software. She's working on new games there.

Dona says she left Atari because it had grown too big for her taste. "There got to be too many people there. The design group I was in became three or four times larger than it had been earlier. It was tough getting that many people to agree on anything. I had been spoiled."

She left because the place just wasn't a candy factory any more.

If you're a regular reader of BLIP, you've learned to count on us for the latest information about video games. And we're not about to disappoint you.

We hereby present an exclusive BLIP preview of the first video game to be set in Milwaukee, Wisconsin!

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LAVERNE and SHIRLEY

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PUT CAPS ON BOTTLES!
ANSWER RINGING DOORBELLS!
FALL ASLEEP ON THE COUCH!

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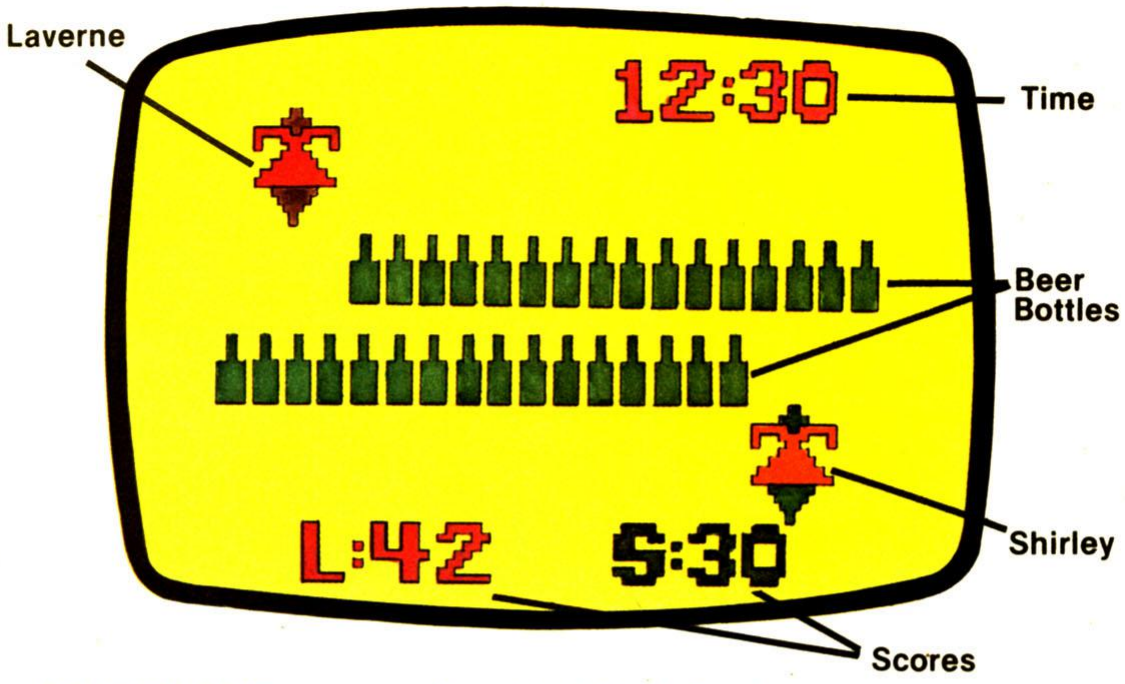
John R. Tebbel
and
Martha Thomases
Art by
Michael Carlin

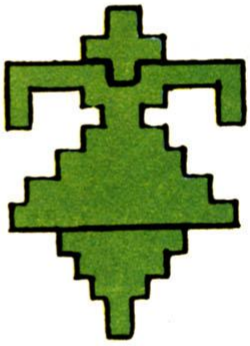


SCREEN ONE

Laverne and Shirley put in a full day's work capping bottles at the Schatz Brewery. The clock ticks off the workday as the bottles pass in front of our heroines.

Use your joystick to aim Laverne's bottle-capper. Press the Action button to release the cap. When Laverne misses a bottle, Shirley's turn begins.

Cap a total of 100 bottles between two players, and you each earn a day's pay ($20). Then it's time to go home.

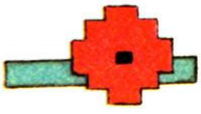


SYMBOLS

Boyfriend

Squiggy

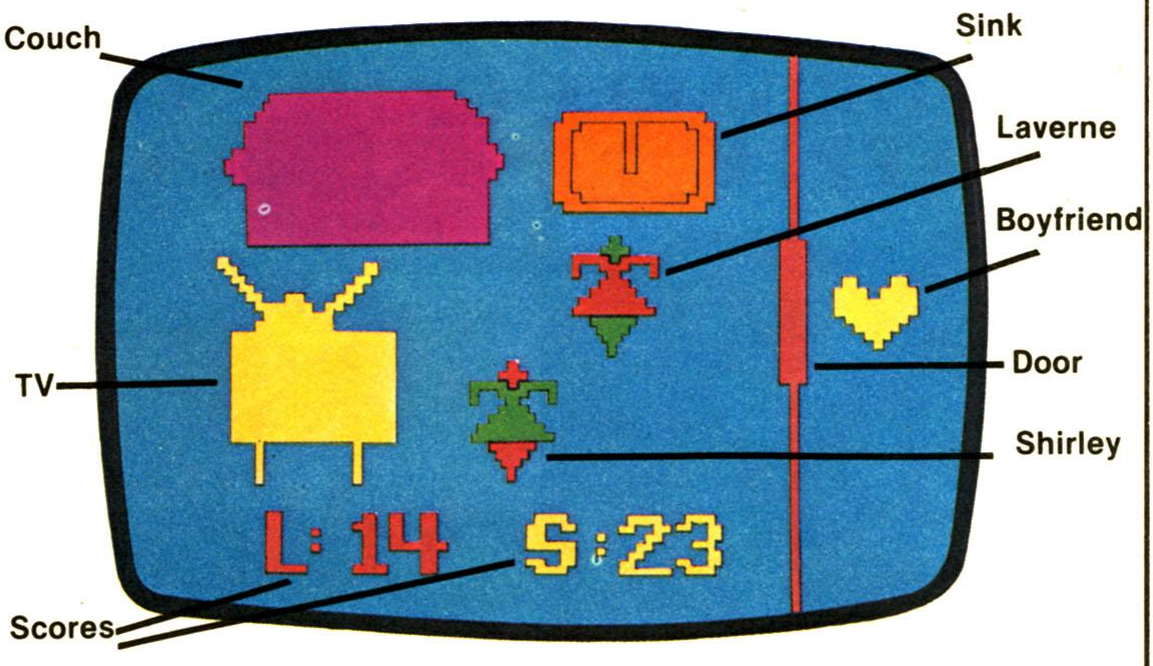
Landlord



Doctor

Lenny

Salesman



SCREEN TWO

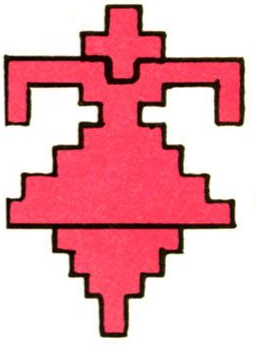
The work day may be over, but your troubles certainly aren't. Laverne and Shirley's social life is even more trying than their job.

In Screen Two, Laverne is on the phone, while Shirley washes the dishes. The doorbell rings, and the race is on!

Is it an eligible bachelor? (Win points.) The landlady? (Lose one day's pay.) Lenny and Squiggy? (Turn off the game and start over.)

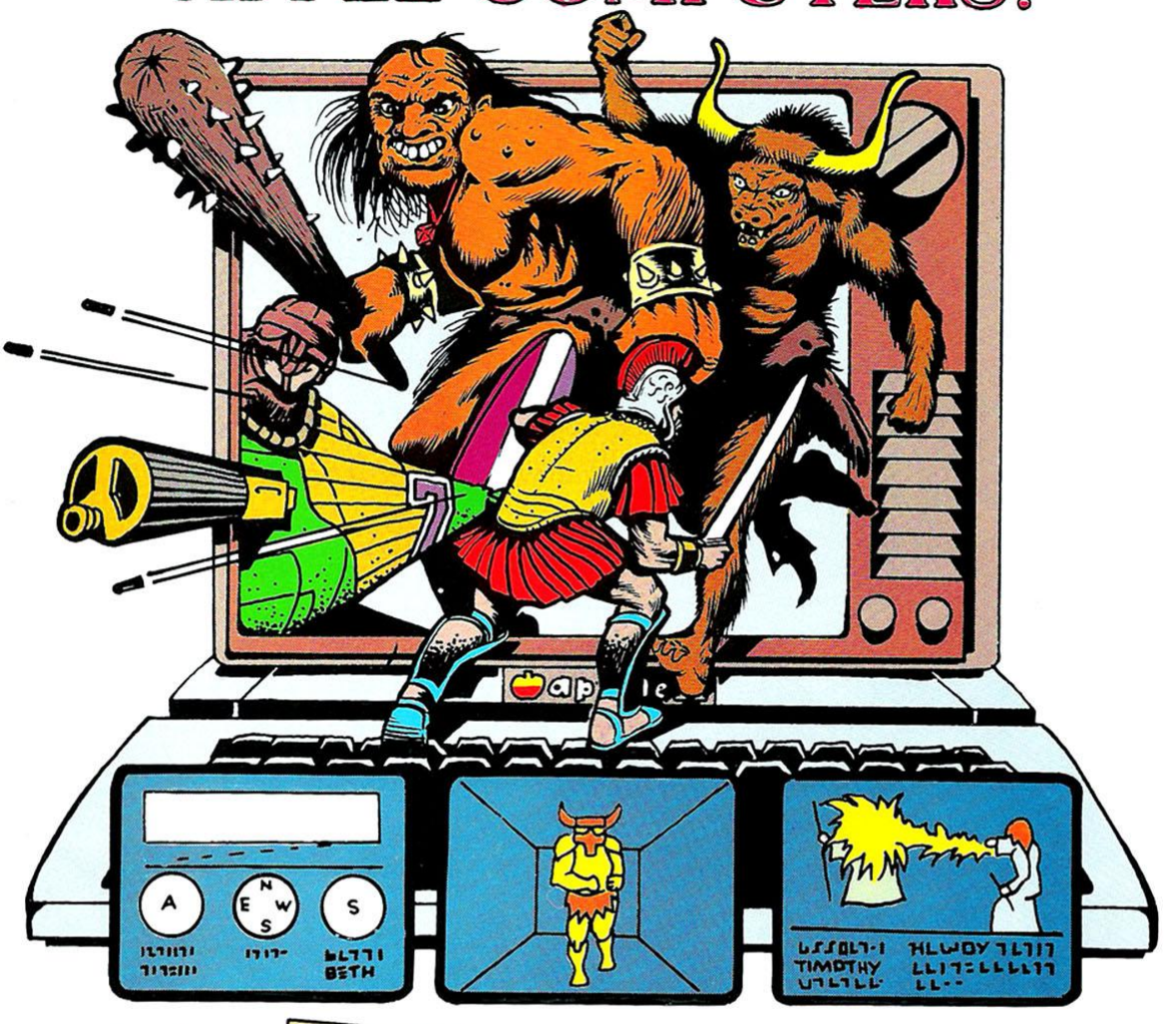
If Laverne doesn't get off the phone, Shirley might beat her to the door and snag a bachelor! But if Shirley leaves a mess of dishes in the sink, the bachelor might turn tail and run!

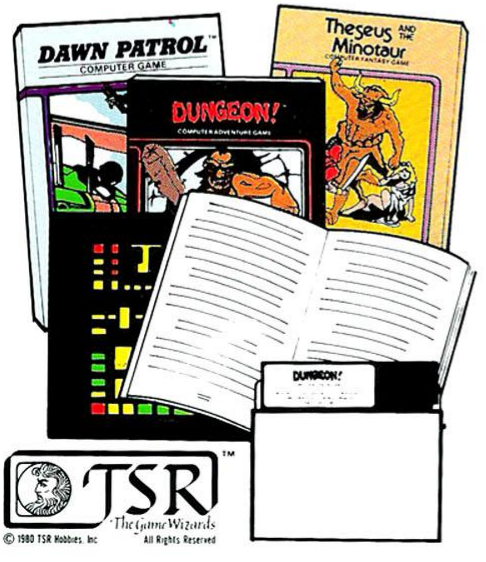
The game ends when one player falls asleep on the couch while watching TV.



GAME NUMBER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
One player	■	■	■	■				
Two players					■	■	■	■
Coffee Breaks	■				■			
No Coffee Breaks		■				■		
Opportunity Knocks Once			■				■	
Opportunity Keeps Knocking				■				■

A REALISTIC LOOK AT AFFORDABLE GAMES FOR APPLE® COMPUTERS.





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OOPS!

I was really interested in the "Hall of Fame" article in your first issue, because I like the idea that somebody is keeping track of high scores. But you have a mistake in that article.

The name of the city where Walt Day works is *Ottumwa*, not *Ottuma*. I just read your second issue, and you made the same mistake there, too.

Martin Harvey
Des Moines, IA

We apologize for the error. If we're going to proclaim Ottumwa, Iowa, the Video Games Capital of the World, the least we can do is get the spelling right.

ATARI 5200

My parents were going to buy an Atari 5200 for Christmas, but the salesman told them that Atari wasn't going to make any more cartridges for it. He said the 5200 was going to be taken off the market soon. Is this true?

Charles Perez
Yonkers, NY

We called the people at Atari to ask them about the future of the 5200. They assured us that there's no truth to what the salesman said. The 5200 is their top-of-the-line product, they said, and they have no intention of pulling it off the market.

COMIC STRIPS

The Donkey Kong and Spider-Man comics in your first two issues were great. Why wasn't there another comic in the third issue?

Paul Hunter
Winston-Salem, NC

We're glad you liked the first two comic features. We didn't have one in the third issue because there were other humor features. We'll have a comic strip from time to time, but not in every issue. Let us know which video games you'd like to see featured in comic strips.

INTELLIVISION COMPUTER

I have an Intellivision system, and somebody told me there's going to be a computer I can hook up to it. Is this true?

Jody Franz
Detroit, MI

Yes, it is. In the next issue of BLIP, we'll have a full report on what Intellivision plans to offer in the next few months.

If you have any questions or opinions for us, please send them to:

BLIP LETTERS
Marvel Comics Group
387 Park Avenue South
New York, N.Y. 10016

ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S BLIP QUIZ

1. The little guy is named Mario.
2. You have to destroy one light trace.
3. There are six slots left.
4. You are facing 10 attackers.
5. The creatures are called hall monsters.
6. You have to hit the tank three times.
7. The third base is called Omega.
8. The Pod is worth the most points.
9. The hammer flashes in yellow.
10. You push the Hyperspace button.

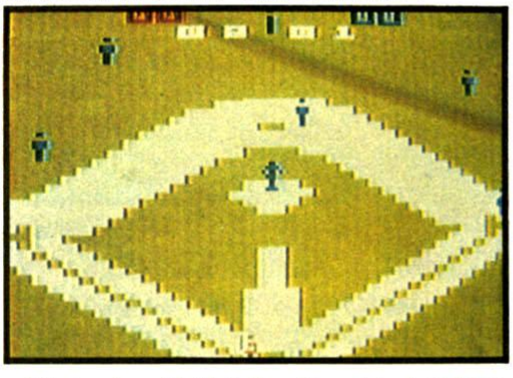
BLIP TIPS!

BASEBALL

Baseball calls for a lot more than physical skill. It's a game of strategy and carefully considered movements. Sometimes the confrontation between a batter (or a baserunner) and pitcher can look like a chess game.

In translating baseball into a video game, the trick is to keep the chess game features without turning it into a board game. With this in mind, we took a look at three popular baseball cartridges for home video systems.

M NETWORK BASEBALL



Made by Mattel for the Atari 2600, this is a two-player game that comes as close to real baseball as anything we tried. The graphics are clear, spotting the baseball is never a problem, and the game responds well to the hand controller. Here are some of the best features of the M Network cartridge:

- You have a complete arsenal of major-league pitches to choose from.
- Base stealing is a real challenge, a good representation of the "chess game" that can go on between a runner and pitcher.
- Bunting offers a true test of skill for the player at bat. You not only get to execute sacrifice bunts; you can also lay one down on the third base line and try beating it out for a single.

On a sharply-hit ground ball, a double play is a real possibility. It may even be possible to pull off a triple play, though we weren't able to do it.

For our money, M Network offers the best baseball video game on the market. It's the only game we tried that has the added bonus of a real duel between pitcher and batter.

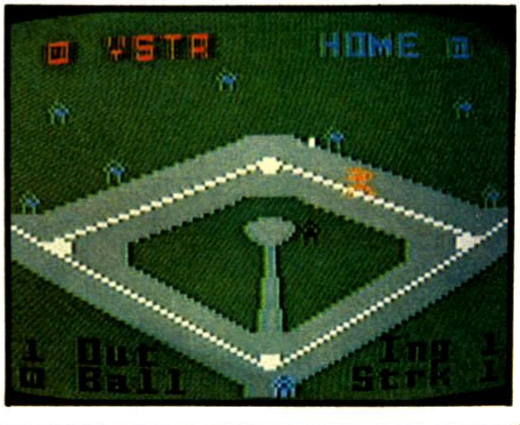
INTELLIVISION BASEBALL

This is also a two-player game. Like most Intellivision cartridges, it offers exceptionally sharp graphics. The Intellivision disk controller, however, isn't as easy to master for baseball as the joystick. Some of the game's features:

- Although you have a limited selection of pitches, you can use a mix to fool the batter into swinging at bad pitches.

The game seems to be biased in favor of the team at bat. For example, it's easy for a batter to beat out infield grounders. Since the bias works in favor of both players, however, the only result is higher scores than you'd expect in a baseball game.

- Base stealing and bunting are both possible, but in neither case do you have the kind of precise control you have with the M Network cartridge.



ATARI REALSPORTS BASEBALL

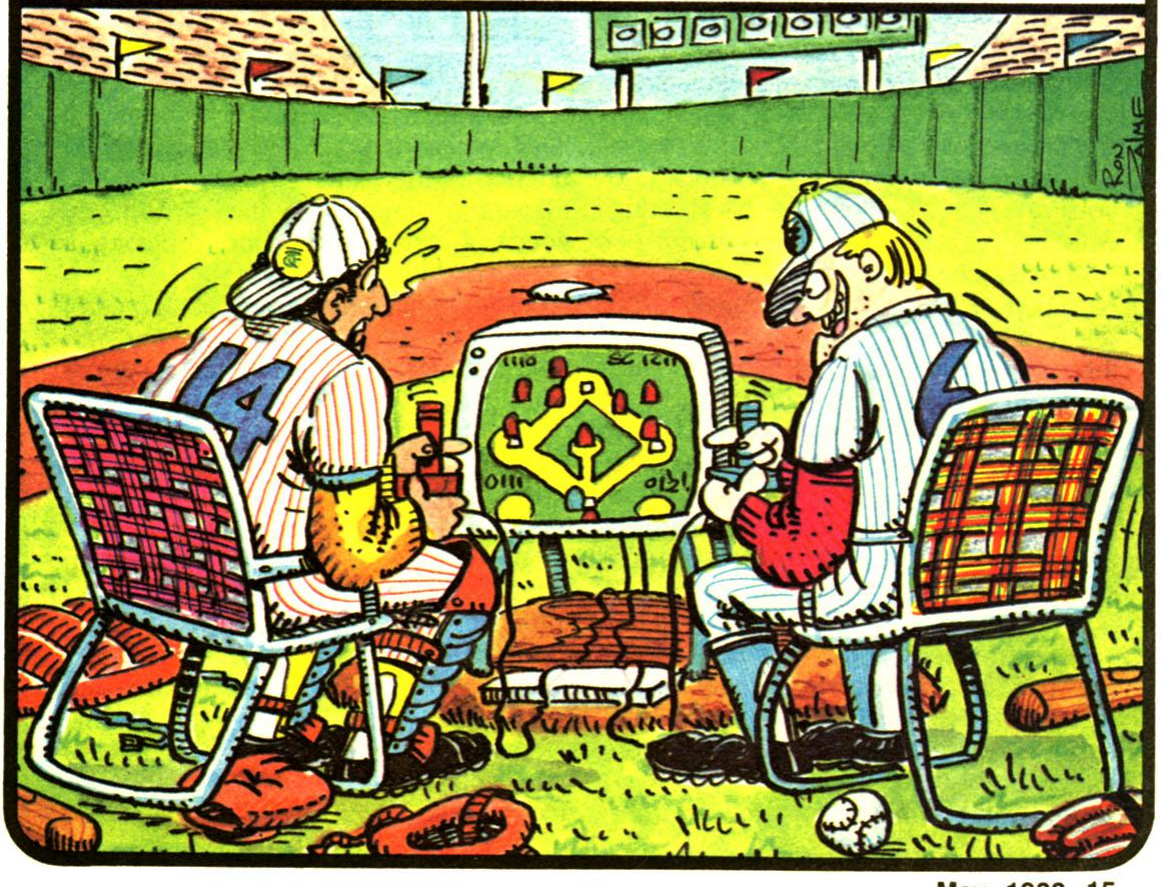
This cartridge was a big disappointment. We were taken in by the title and expected something close to real baseball. What we got was a frustrating session at the controls.

There are two good things about the REALSPORTS BASEBALL game. First, it's the only one of the three cartridge games in which a ball hit to the outfield can be caught on a fly. It's also the only one of the three in which one person can play against the computer.

Here are some of the problems we had:

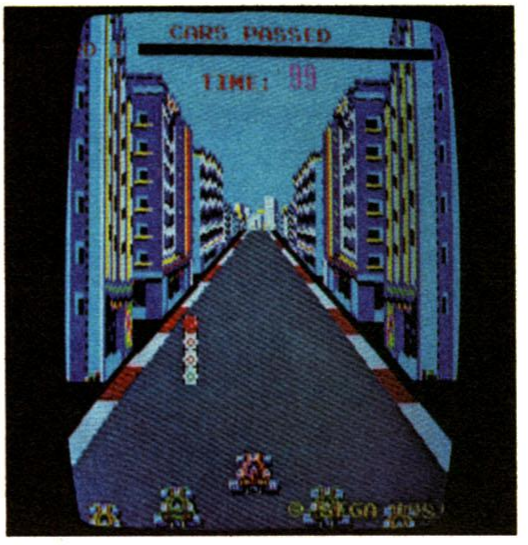
- All pitches are thrown across the middle of the plate, but they are arbitrarily called strikes or balls by the computer.
- It's just about impossible to throw out a base stealer. We never succeeded at it, and, in the one-player version, neither did the computer.
- You have no control over which player will field a batted ball. The computer decides that for you.
- When you play against the computer, it's easy to stretch a single into a home run. All you have to do is keep running. The computer doesn't even try to throw you out on the basepaths.

Add to all those problems the fact that the graphics are weak, and you have to place REALSPORTS BASEBALL at the bottom of the list. We recommend that you not buy it without first seeing the game in action.



BLiP TIPS II

TURBO



You're at the wheel of a speeding race car as it hurtles along a city freeway. Tall buildings loom up on your left and right. The deep roar of the powerful engine fills your ears.

You press the accelerator to the floor and flash past slower cars. Faster cars approach you from behind and you have to veer out of their way.

Suddenly, the terrain changes. Now you're swooping down a steep slope. Cars race toward you in the left lane. An oncoming car trying to pass swings into your lane. Only by spinning the steering wheel do you escape certain death.

Another change of terrain, and you're barreling along an open highway. You relax, but only for a second, because the roadway has become suddenly narrower. You cross a long bridge, and you must still cope with oncoming cars.

Then, in rapid succession, you have to maneuver your car around long curves and through back tunnels. You also have to deal with rain-slick highways and dangerous ice patches.

As you already know, this is TURBO, the most popular of the arcade driving games. TURBO will teach you things about cars you'll never learn in a driver-education course.

The game comes in two different models — the regular stand-up type, and a cockpit version. The cockpit is a closed-in area that contains your controls, a seat, and the screen. You get a greater sense of realism (and more privacy) in the cockpit version. But it usually costs two quarters, instead of one.

HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

The object of TURBO is to pass at least 30 cars during the opening sequence of the game. You have a limited amount of time to do this. When you wreck a car, a new one replaces it immediately.

If you do manage to get past 30 cars, you enter a period of extended play. You then get more playing time for each car you pass.

When your car crashes during extended play, it explodes. But you can earn as many as four additional cars during extended play to use as spares.

The controls for TURBO are a steering wheel, an accelerator which you control with your right foot, and a two-position gearshift. Push the gearshift forward and you're in low. Pull it back and you're in high gear.

There isn't any brake. To draw to a stop, you have to lift your foot from the accelerator.

TACTICS

1 Your most important control is the steering wheel. Grip it firmly, but not tensely. It's wise to keep both hands on the steering wheel. You have to spin it constantly to the right or left to avoid crashing, and most people spin faster with both hands.

2 You shift only after a crash, and it's a tricky procedure. Use your left hand to throw the lever into low gear. Then floor the accelerator, and, after no more than a second or two, pull the gearshift into high. Then get your left hand back to the steering wheel as fast as you can.

3 As a general rule, always drive as fast as possible. That's the best way to avoid crashes with cars coming up from behind.

4 Stay close to the right or left edge of the highway. Veer toward the center only to avoid oncoming vehicles, and ease back when they've passed you. Some TURBO players prefer operating from the middle of the road, but that involves a lot more steering. Until you're an expert, cling to the edge of the road whenever possible.

5 After you insert your money, but *before* you press the Start button, shift into low gear and press the accelerator to the floor. This will assure you the fastest possible getaway.

6 Learn to watch the whole screen, not just your car and the area around it. You have to be able to glimpse oncoming cars just as they appear on the edge of the screen. Otherwise, they'll be on top of you before you know it.

SPECIAL HAZARDS

The TURBO scroll introduces one problem after another in quick succession. There's a different strategy for coping with each of them. Here's a rundown:

THE CITY

As you speed along, keep close to the right edge of the highway, spinning the wheel to the left to avoid cars in your lane. Then get back fast to dodge oncoming cars.

THE DIP

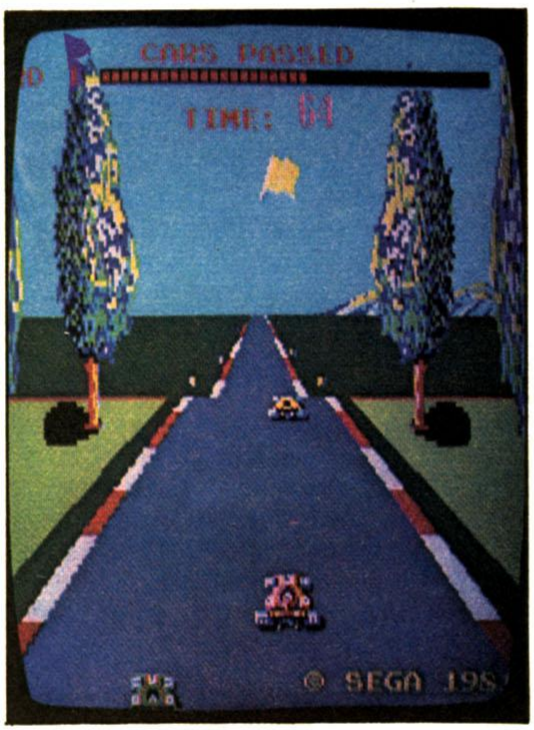
When you come upon this abrupt downhill slope, be prepared to slow down to avoid crashing. For example, as you whiz along in the right lane, you'll encounter slower cars ahead of you. But you won't be able to pass them because of oncoming cars in the left lane. You have to slow down, then speed up again when it becomes possible to pass.

THE HIGHWAY

Flat-out speed is the strategy here. If you should occasionally swerve off the highway, get back on as fast as you can. Traveling on the shoulder cuts your speed.

THE BRIDGES

The roadway narrows slightly whenever you encounter a bridge, making it difficult to pass other cars. But there's still room to slip by the slower vehicles if you're careful.



CURVES

Caution is the key word here. Always cut your speed in a curve, even though it means you won't be able to pass as many cars.

THE WALL

As you make your way around a gentle curve, the roadway is bordered on one side by a tall structure. To get through this area, you have to squeeze by several cars, by passing either on the inside (close to the wall) or on the outside.

THE AMBULANCE

At irregular intervals, a small flag appears at the top of the screen. That's a warning that an ambulance is scooting up from behind. The flat is followed by the sound of a siren. At that point, you have to slow down and pull over to the side, until the ambulance has gone past your car. Don't try to outrace the ambulance. It will stay right at your heels until you reduce your speed and let it pass.

THE TUNNEL

The tunnel first appears as a small speck in the distance. Then, suddenly, it's a black hole and you're inside it. Cars are winging toward you in the left lane. There are also slower-moving cars in the right lane with you. As you do with a dip, slow down and pass when the left lane is empty. Then get back to the right lane as soon as you can.

WET PAVEMENT

You'll run into small, light-blue puddles from time to time. They cause you to temporarily lose control of the car. Don't panic — don't jerk the wheel in one direction or the other. Simply steer gently in the direction of the spin.

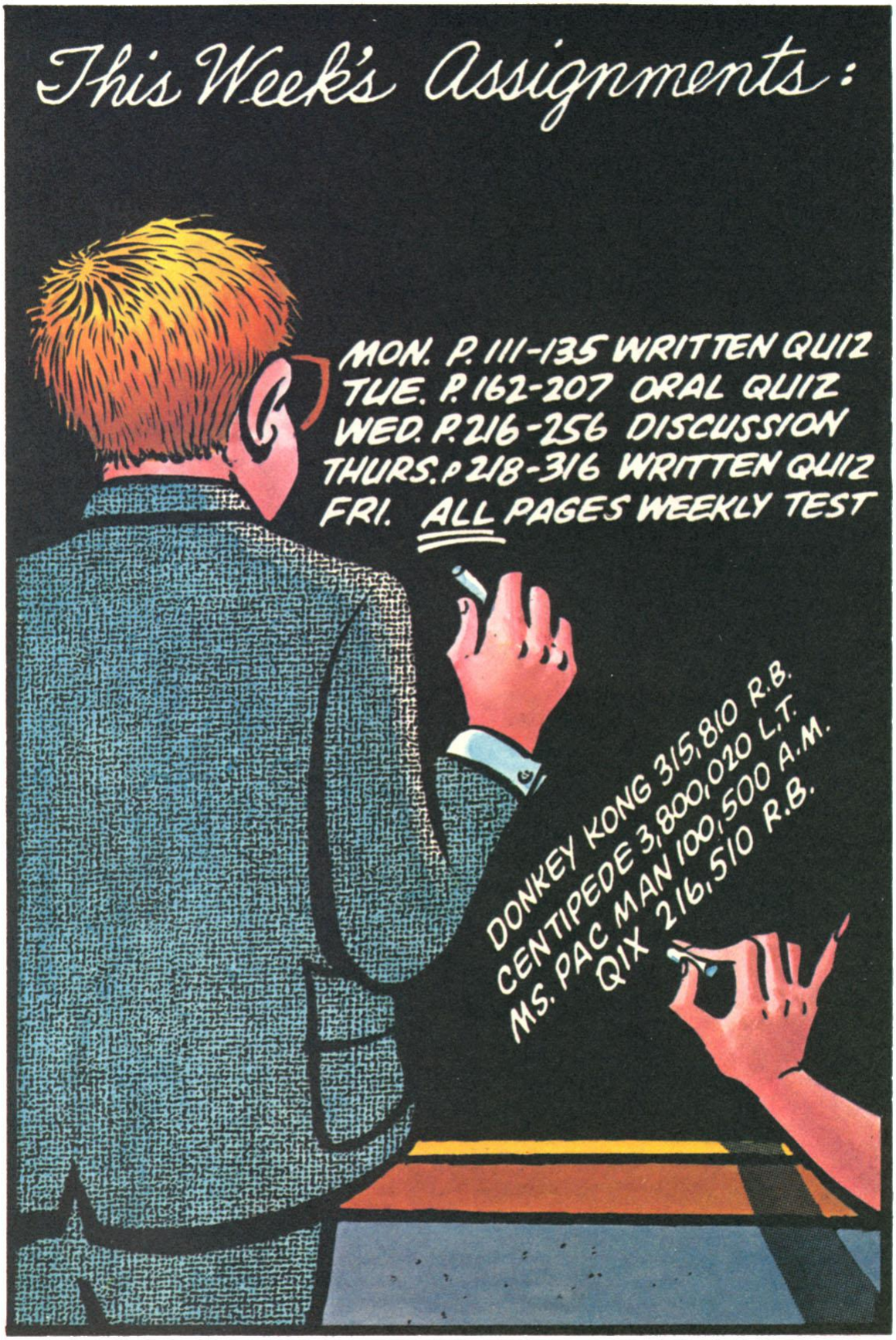
CITY II

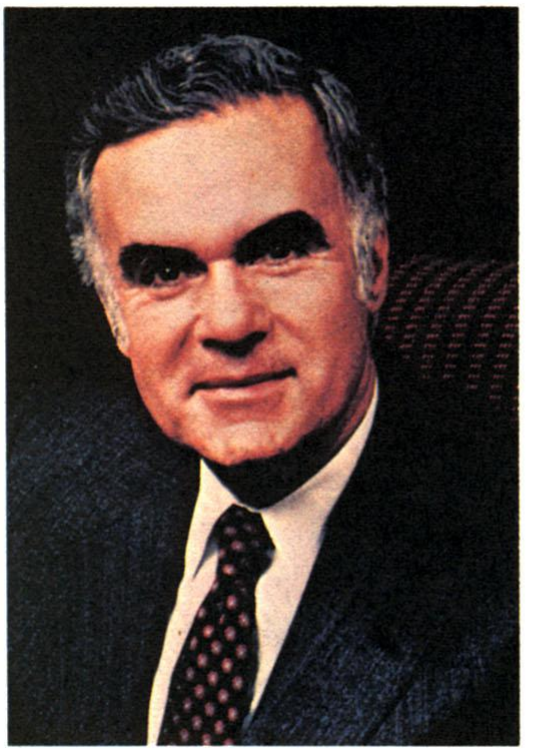
This city is filled with dark blue cars. They're difficult to see because they're being driven along black asphalt streets. All you can do here is slow down to avoid collisions.

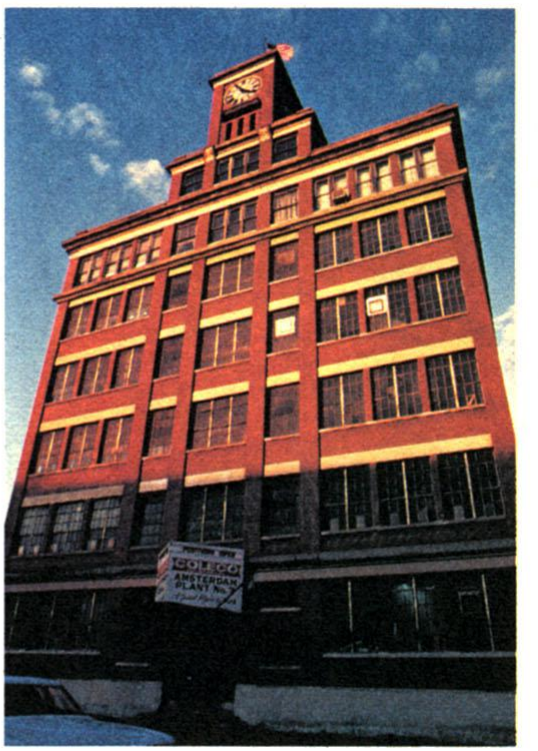
You'll learn to recognize City II as a welcome sight. It's an indication that you're entering the extended play phase of the game. Continue to pass cars as you have been doing, and you'll start earning bonus playing time.

If you get this far in TURBO, you'll probably find it relaxing to slip behind the wheel of a real car. Driving in the real world isn't nearly as taxing as getting through this game.

—George Sullivan


This Week's Assignments:
MON. P. 111-135 WRITTEN QUIZ
TUE. P. 162-207 ORAL QUIZ
WED. P. 216-256 DISCUSSION
THURS. P 218-316 WRITTEN QUIZ
FRI. ALL PAGES WEEKLY TEST
DONKEY KONG 315,810 R.B.
CENTIPEDE 3,800,020 L.T.
MS. PAC MAN 100,500 A.M.
QIX 216,510 R.B.





Looking to the FUTURE

Not many people have ever heard of Amsterdam, New York. It's a small factory town in the Mohawk Valley, about 200 miles north of New York City.

But Amsterdam has been making headlines lately. Although the country is suffering from a serious unemployment problem, Amsterdam is booming. HELP WANTED signs are going up all over town.

The reason? Amsterdam is where Coleco Industries, Inc. manufactures its ColecoVision home video system. ColecoVision is being described as the biggest thing to hit the video game field since Atari brought out its 2600 in the late 1970's.

We told you about ColecoVision — and about VENTURE, our favorite cartridge — in last month's issue of BLIP. Since then, we've had a couple of long talks with Arnold Greenberg, Coleco's president. He and his brother Leonard run the company that their father started back in 1932.

At that time, it was known as the Connecticut Leather Company. (Notice the first two letters of each word in that name.) Maurice Greenberg had come to the U.S. from Minsk, Russia. He opened a store in Hartford, Connecticut, where he sold supplies to shoe repair shops.

By the 1940's, the company was selling leathercraft kits that featured famous characters like Mickey Mouse. In the 1950's Coleco became the world's largest manufacturer of above-ground pools.

But it was in 1968 that the company took the step that would eventually result in ColecoVision. In that year, they bought a company called Eagle Toys of Canada.

One of Eagle Toys' products was a realistic table-top game called Rod Hockey. Each player controlled an entire hockey team by spinning six slim metal rods that ran across the top of the rink. Rod Hockey was a fast-moving game that called for a good deal of eye-hand coordination.

The former leather company had some success with Rod Hockey, and they began looking at other parts of the games market. In the early 1970's, Coleco heard about PONG, a video version of Ping-Pong in

which electronic paddles slapped a ball back and forth across a black-and-white screen. PONG was the first successful coin-operated video game.

Coleco decided to make a home version of PONG. They called it TELSTAR, and they introduced it in 1976. It sold well, but the public seemed to be more interested in hand-held games than other types of electronic games.

So Coleco entered the hand-held market, too. The company offered a one-player football game and a series of two-player hand-held games based on other sports.

Within two years, however, consumers turned their backs on hand-helds. Atari had introduced its VCS, a system that allowed a player to switch at will from TIC-TAC-TOE to SPACE INVADERS, from VIDEO CHECKERS to BREAKOUT. Soon after that, Magnavox offered Odyssey, and then Intellivision arrived.

At that point, Coleco decided to wait. Arnold Greenberg explains that the company didn't want to come out with another "me-too"product. He wanted something that went beyond the existing Atari, Intellivision, and Odyssey cartridges.

So he put several million dollars aside to be used for research and development. What the company wanted was a system that moved video games into a new level of sophistication. ColecoVision was the result of all this.

What makes one video game cartridge dull and unappealing and another exciting and imaginative? A large part of the answer has to do with the ability of each cartridge to store information in its "memory."

Computer memory is measured in the number of pieces of information — or "bytes" — it can hold. The letters that fill up a typewritten page use up 1K — approximately 1,000 bytes — of computer memory.

The earliest video games used a 16K chip. Nowadays, these are being called "first generation" games. Most of them look dull by today's standards.

Intellivision was the first to come out with cartridges that had 128K of memory. The George Plimpton TV ads drove home the point that Intellivision's games were "more like the real thing" than Atari's. These 128K cartridges are called "second generation" games.

Now, with ColecoVision (and also with the Atari 5200), we have third generation cartridges. These hold 256K of working memory, twice as much as any previous cartridge available.

The increased memory allows for more action and much better screen graphics than were possible before in home games. It's the reason that ColecoVision has been able to offer such good "translations" of popular arcade games like DONKEY KONG and VENTURE.

But Arnold Greenberg says that third generation cartridges are already history. Coleco, he says, is already planning for the years ahead with fourth and fifth generation software.

"Fourth generation video games," Greenberg says, "will offer increased user participation. The games will talk, and they'll have more sensitive hand controls."

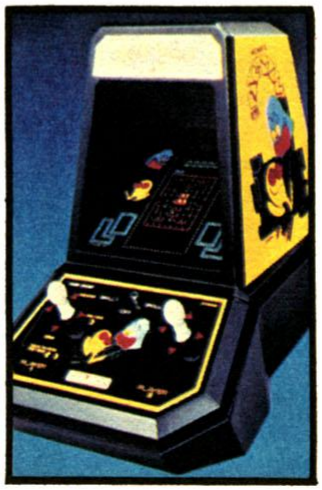
The fifth generation of home video technology promises even greater excitement. It will be centered on the home computer.

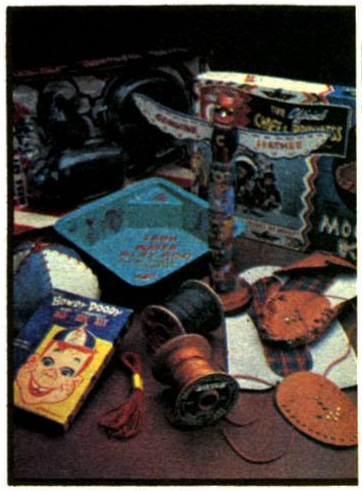
Mr. Greenberg thinks Coleco is better equipped to deal with fifth generation software than the big computer companies. "We don't approach the computer in the same way as IBM or Xerox," he says. "We're more interested in marketing than in technology. I think we have a better understanding of what people want."

At the beginning of 1982, Atari and Mattel were the leaders in the video game field. But the situation is changing. Thanks to the superior quality of its cartridges, Coleco is beginning to shoulder aside the two leaders. And, for 1983, Coleco has promised a converter that will turn ColecoVision into a computer.

Nobody knows how successful the Coleco challenge will be. But those workers in Amsterdam, New York, will probably be kept busy for some time to come.

—George Sullivan





FIND THE FAKE

Last month, BLIP closed with a challenge. We gave you descriptions of four current video games, all of which sounded a little farfetched. Your challenge was to figure out which one of the games we had made up.

At least one reader called to say that it was obvious we'd made them all up. He refused to believe that any of them were real. He was wrong, though.

Read on, and find out just how real three of those games are.

ESCAPE

The full title of this cartridge is JOURNEY: ESCAPE. The San Francisco rock group, Journey, lent its name — and a little of its music — to a game that is set at a rock concert. The cartridge comes from Data Age, and it's made for the Atari 2600 system.

The idea is to get all five members of Journey from the concert hall to their escape vehicle, which is waiting outside. (The real vehicle is pictured on Journey's current album, which, you might have guessed, is called *Escape.)*

The game opens with a short music segment and one member of the group at the bottom of the screen. You start with a $50,000 payment and one minute to get the member past the obstacles and into the waiting vehicle.

The obstacles include autograph-seeking teenage fans, press photographers, and shifty-eyed promoters. (Their eyes actually move from side to side.)

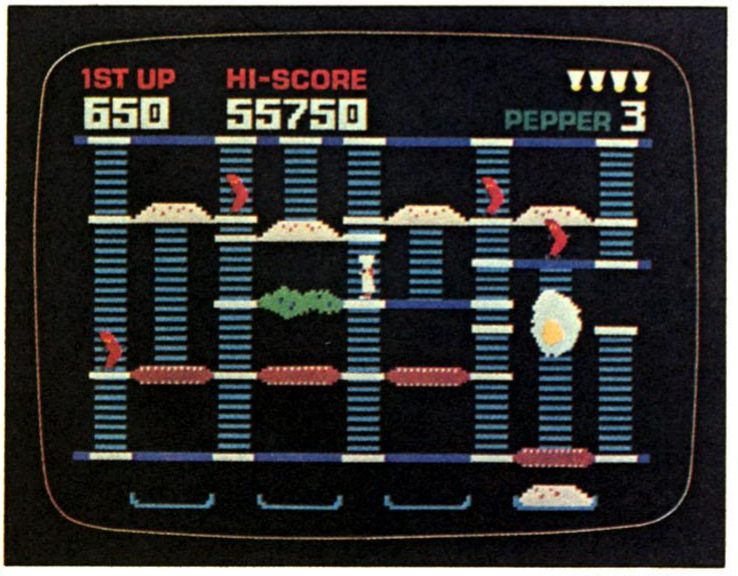
Every time you run into one of these obstacles, you're not only slowed down, but you also lose a piece of your payment. So you have to maneuver the group past all these people by deftly using your joystick.

There's one helpful character in the game whose job it is to help the musicians get to their car. He's the Loyal Roadie, and when you run into him, you become invulnerable for several seconds. The obstacles pose no threat during that time.

When you get a member safely into the car, you go back to the bottom of the screen and begin again with the next musician. The boards are all essentially the same, but the challenge becomes more and more difficult as you work with musicians 2 through 5.

Get all five Journey members to escape in their car, and they're all ready for another concert — or another crack at the game.

BURGER TIME



BURGER TIME is an arcade game brought to you by the friendly folks at Data East. It features chef Peter Pepper, in a fast-paced game that involves putting together a series of superburgers.

On each level, Peter is faced with hamburgers, buns, cheese, lettuce, and tomatoes. As he passes over each of these ingredients, it falls to the bottom of the screen. If you use the joystick properly, the ingredients will fall in the proper order, and you'll have a series of completed superburgers at the bottom of the screen.

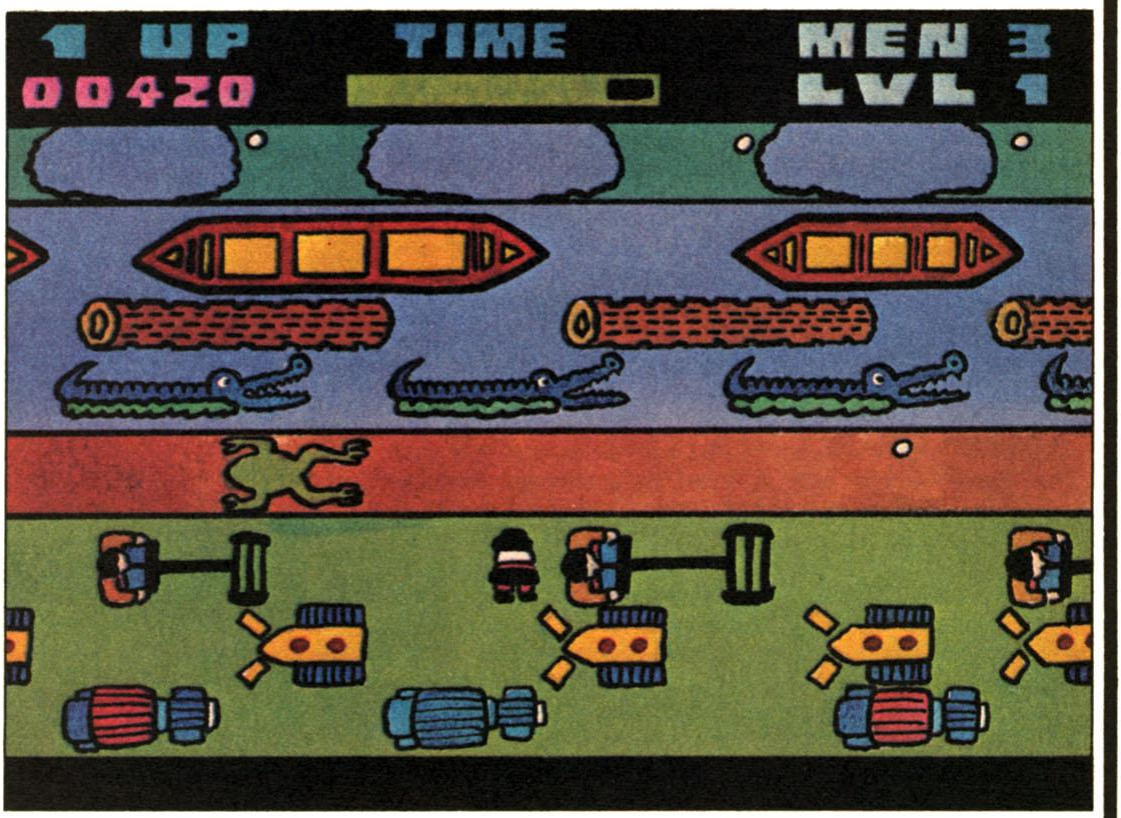
Of course, no video game is that simple. As you might expect, Peter Pepper has some enemies to contend with. On each level, a pickle, a hot dog, and an egg are trying to keep Peter from carrying out his duties.

His only weapon is five pinches of pepper. By pressing the Fire button, you'll send one of these pinches in the

direction of an enemy. Then you can go back to constructing those superburgers.

Periodically, a dessert food pops up on the screen. If Peter can get to this food, he earns extra points and a bonus pepper ration.

The game has six different screens, and each screen has from four to seven hamburgers to be put together. All that work with all that meat might be enough to turn anybody into a vegetarian.



PREPPIE

Yes, this one's real, too. It's a computer game designed by Adventure International for the Atari 400 and 800 computers.

Like JOURNEY: ESCAPE, PREPPIE begins with a musical introduction. It's the opening section of "While Strolling Through the Park One Day."

Once that's over with, Wadsworth Overcash appears at the bottom of your screen. Wadsworth, a recent graduate of a fashionable prep school, is faced with the problem of getting to the top of the screen, retrieving a series of golf balls, and carrying them to the bottom.

Between him and the golf balls are a series of obstacles — bulldozers, lawn mowers, golf carts, and a stream filled with canoes, logs, alligators, and frogs.

Frogs? How treacherous can a frog be? In this game, very treacherous indeed. The frog in PREPPIE does as much damage to Wadsworth as the cars do in FROGGER.

The game turns out to be a lot of fun to play. But we were thinking that there might have been a better title than PREPPIE. Maybe it should have been called FROGGER'S REVENGE.

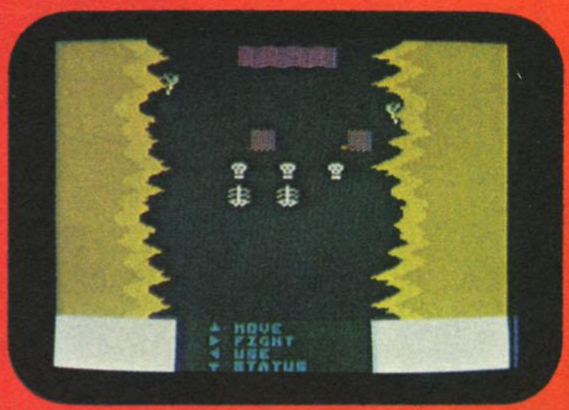
Last, and probably least — there's the game we made up ourselves. It's called CLEANUP, and when we invented it, we were trying to think of the goofiest imaginable idea for a video game.

We still think it's goofy, but we're not so sure any more about how farfetched it is. In fact, we expect to hear from a game company any day now. We're ready to discuss selling the rights to our invention.

And we'll see if we can trick you again soon with another collection of "impossible" video games.

SPACE DUEL
STARGUN
KILLER COMET
VIDEO SALES AND SERVICE
VIDEO SALES AND SERVICE
VIDEO
HOME VIDEO ARCADE
RON ZAME

Player's Choice



Supercharger

One of the newer innovations for the Atari 2600 is the Supercharger from Starpath. This little unit, which sells for $69.95, is a little larger than an Atari cartridge, and it packs a mighty wallop. It more than doubles the memory of your VCS, allowing for a lot more action and better graphics.

Games for the Supercharger sell for about $15 each, but they come in cassette form. That means you also need a tape player to feed the program into the Supercharger before you can get started.

Dragonstomper

DRAGONSTOMPER is Starpath's latest creation, and it's probably the best "Swords and Sorcery" game yet produced for a home video game system. The cassette is divided into three separate parts. You have to survive one part before you can go on to the next.

The first portion takes place in an enchanted countryside. You have to do away with a number of evil creatures that inhabit the valley before they get to you. You're severely outnumbered, but there are some objects in the area that can increase your power.

From time to time, you come upon magic items — rings, crosses, staffs, charms, and potions. Unfortunately, they're usually found in the possession of some loathsome nasty. They're yours for the taking, provided you kill the nasty first.

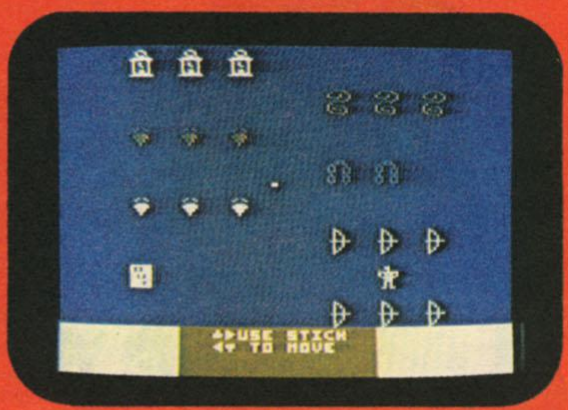
Three of the five magic items are helpful. One will heal your warrior if he's wounded; a second will eliminate the deadly traps that surround the castles; and a third increases your Dragonstomper's chances of striking an opponent.

The other two magic items are harmful. One takes away your strength, and one decreases your chances of hitting an opponent.

If you get through the first landscape (with or without the help of magic), you're free to try reaching the oppressed village (the second part of the game). Before you can cross over the bridge leading to the village, though, you have to locate an identification paper or enough gold to bribe the guard on the bridge.

The village is more like a breather than a challenge for your Dragonstomper. It's the part of the game where you get ready to enter the evil dragon's lair. During your stay in the village, you must equip yourself with whatever you think you'll need to battle the dragon.

Player's Choice



You travel through the village, stopping in shops to buy medicine, weapons, and anything else you might need — and can afford. When you're finished shopping, you try to convince some storekeepers to accompany you on the final leg of your journey. This, too, will cost you money.

The third and final sequence takes place inside the dragon's lair. This part of the game calls for all the strength and intelligence the Dragonstomper has.

The lair is laced with traps that slowly eat away at your strength. For each one of your attacks, the dragon attacks you twice. And the dragon has to be hit several times before it will fall.

There are two ways to win at DRAGONSTOMPER. One is to kill the dragon. The other is to capture the enchanted gem inside the dragon's lair and make off with it. The gem is located behind the dragon, and you can get at it only by risking attacks from the rear.

DRAGONSTOMPER is a tough game to master. Many players think the hardest part of the game is getting through the enchanted countryside. You have no weapons at the beginning, and you're very vulnerable.

A good strategy in part one is to challenge a warrior to a fistfight right at the beginning. If you win, you get to take his axe, and that will help you get through the rest of the landscape.

ALSO FROM STARPATH

Though DRAGONSTOMPER is the best Supercharger game, Starpath has others you'll want to think about. Here are a few we enjoyed:

COMMUNIST MUTANTS FROM SPACE: This is a weird variation on GALAXIAN, the popular arcade game. Your home planet is being overrun by mutant warriors. The more mutants you destroy, the meaner the survivors become. You're armed with penetrating missiles and with guided missiles that eliminate several mutants at a time.

FIREBALL: You face an unlimited number of walls, and you're armed with fireballs for destroying them, brick by brick. You have to juggle the fireball (to keep from burning yourself), then hurl it back at the wall of blocks.

SUICIDE MISSION: You shrink down to the size of a microbe to do battle with a deadly virus that threatens to destroy a human body. You navigate through the bloodstream, trying to reach the heart in time to save the patient.

FRANTIC: The description is simple, but the game isn't. The challenge is to juggle several burning batons. The more you can keep in the air, the higher your point total.

—Mike Meyers

Movies, 1909

Comic Books, 1954

TV, 1950

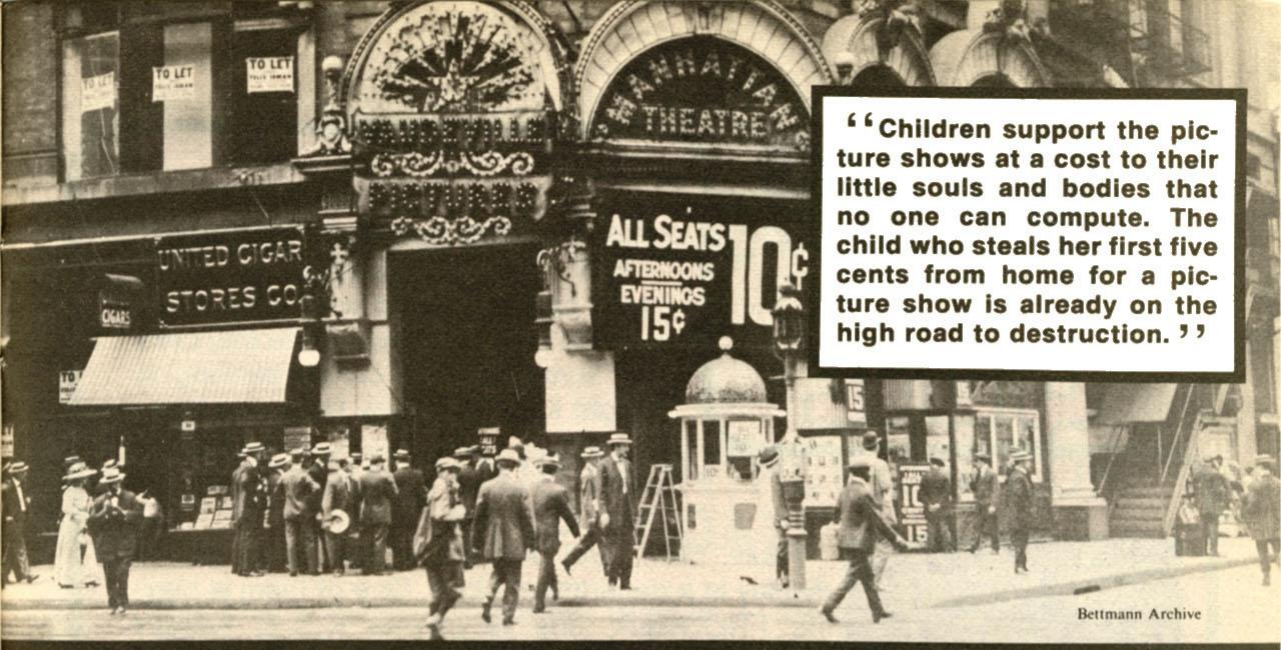
Rock Music, 1957

ALL QUOTES ON THIS PAGE WERE UNCOVERED THROUGH RESEARCH IN A PUBLIC LIBRARY AND ARE GUARANTEED TO BE AUTHENTIC.

Protect Our Children!

Has anyone told you lately that video games will turn your brain to oatmeal and make you forget your last name?

Relax. Your parents heard the same things said about what they were interested in at your age. So did your grandparents, and maybe even your great-grandparents.

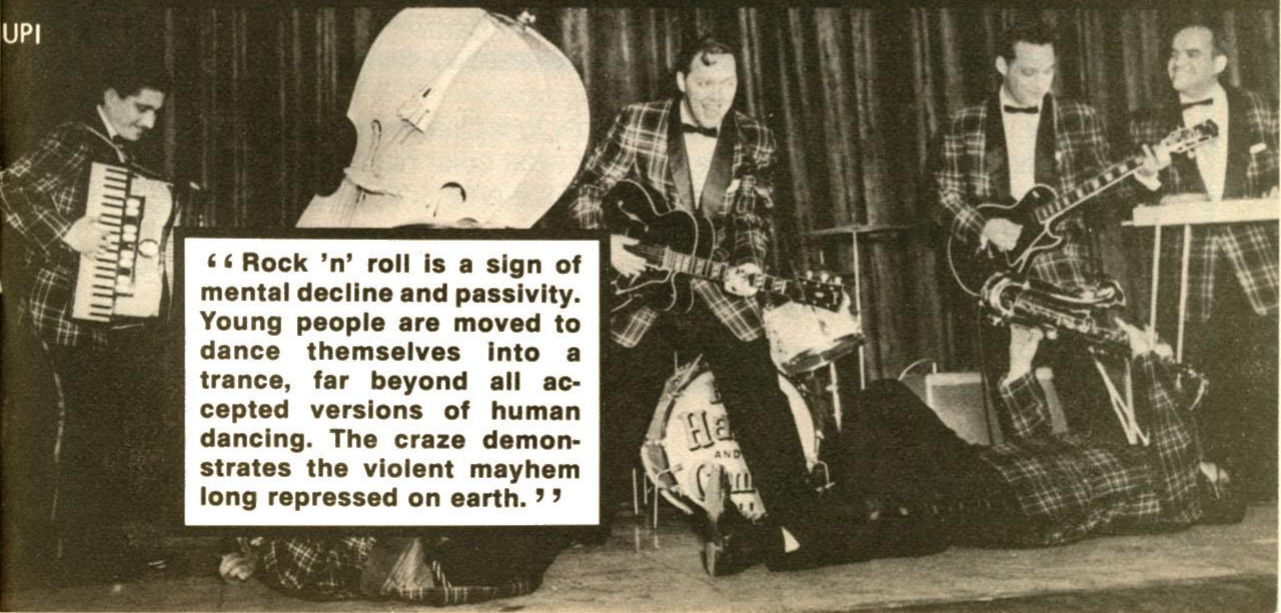


"Children support the picture shows at a cost to their little souls and bodies that no one can compute. The child who steals her first five cents from home for a picture show is already on the high road to destruction."

Bettmann Archive

"Comic books lead children to crimes of violence by showing such events in public places. We need a ratings system which would leave serious comics on the stand, but for sale only to those over the age of 16."

"Now any broadcasting radical may enter the home and sow the seeds of juvenile delinquency. In millions of private homes, crime stories and their horrors are permitted to corrupt innocent children."

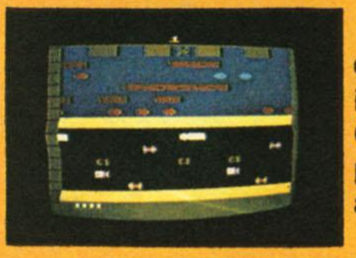


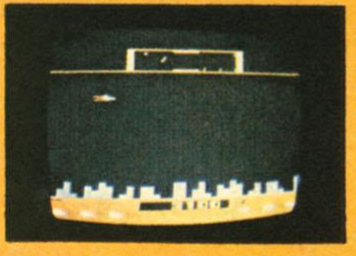
"Rock 'n' roll is a sign of mental decline and passivity. Young people are moved to dance themselves into a trance, far beyond all accepted versions of human dancing. The craze demonstrates the violent mayhem long repressed on earth."

BLIP QUIZ

We know how good your eye-hand coordination is. Now let's see how sharp your mind is.

This is a reasoning puzzle that calls for some slow and careful thinking. It might keep you busy for a long time.





Paula, Sam, and Joe are at the video games display in a department store. One of them is playing FROGGER, one is playing K.C.'S KRAZY CHASE, and one is playing DEFENDER. One of the players has blue eyes, a second has brown eyes, and the third has green eyes.

We'll give you clues about the three players. Using only those clues, figure out who is playing which game, and what color eyes each player has. Here are the clues:

1. *Paula never plays maze games.*
2. *The DEFENDER player has green eyes.*
3. *Joe does not have brown eyes.*
4. *The KRAZY CHASE player has blue eyes.*
5. *Joe is not playing DEFENDER.*
6. *The FROGGER player has brown eyes.*
7. *Sam plays only war games.*

Now, we'll give you one hint about how to tackle this problem. First, try to figure out what Joe is playing and what color his eyes are. Then do the same for Sam. After that, you'll have only one game and color left, and they belong to Paula.

ANSWER IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE OF BLIP.

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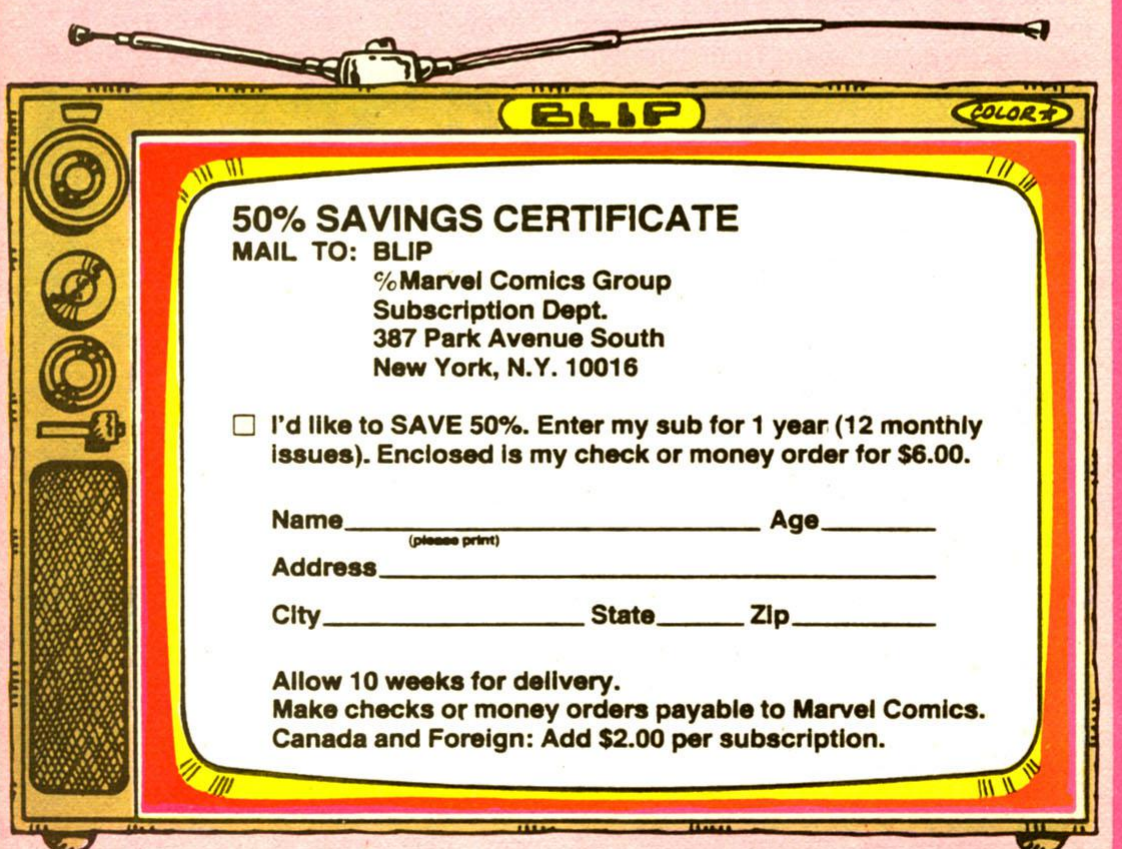

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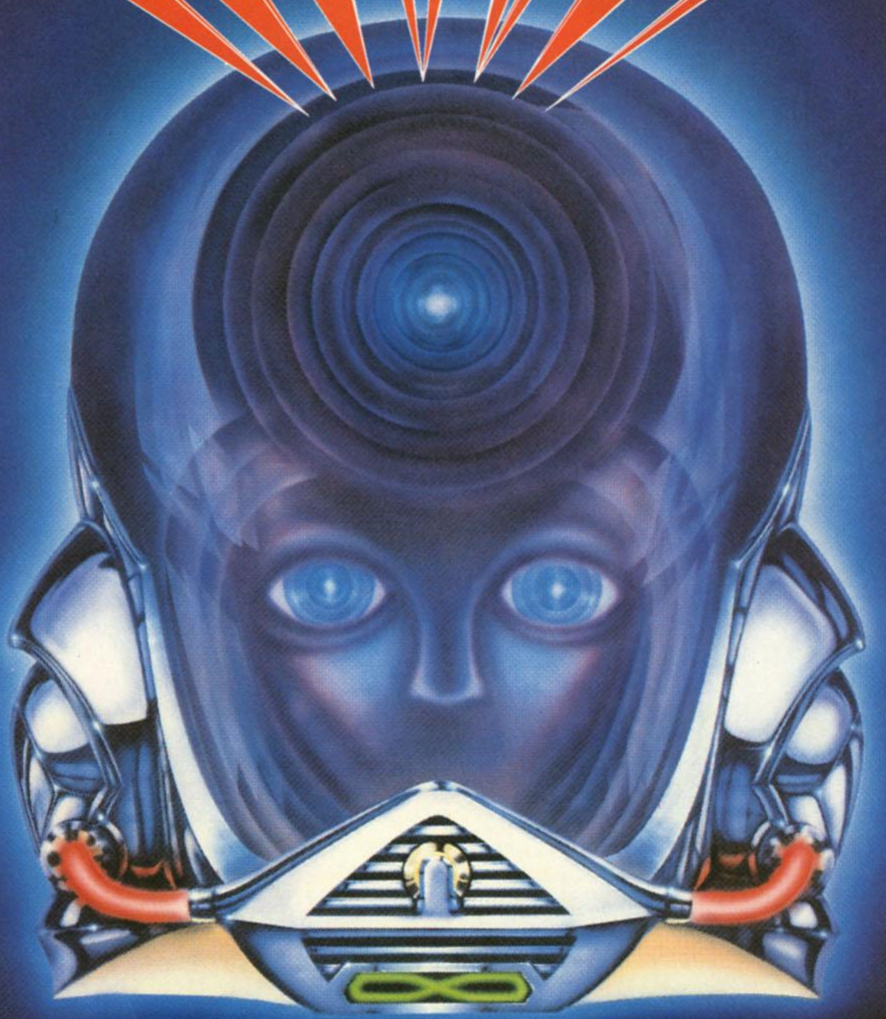
AN EXCITING NEW FRONTIER IN VIDEO GAMES

JOURNEY



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NOW INTELLIVISION® OWNERS CAN TAKE FROGGER'S LIFE INTO THEIR OWN HANDS.

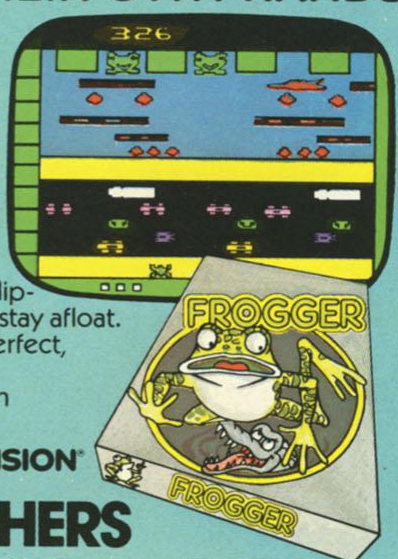
Now Intellivision® owners can hop Frogger™ home; because Frogger has just made the jump to Intellivision®—with all the enhanced, colorful graphics Intellivision® is famous for. But that doesn't make Frogger's journey home any easier.

Frogger still must cross a highway, where reckless hot rods hurtle by, and huge trucks go thundering in his path. Every safe jump is a crucial step home.

Beyond is the raging river where the safety of a slippery log or diving turtle is all Frogger can count on to stay afloat.

Frogger's last leap to his lily pad home must be perfect, or it's back to the road to try again.

Good luck, Intellivision® owners. Frogger's life is in your hands too.



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